

## *What is being done to protect personnel from asbestos exposure ?*

When asbestos containing materials were initially discovered at Cherry Point, a facility Operations and Maintenance program was initiated. This O&M program provides guidance in the safe maintenance and removal of ACM, with the first priority being protection of building occupants where ACM is present.

Specialized contractors are used when ACM is to be disturbed or removed. In addition, facility maintenance personnel undergo annual safety training for working around or with asbestos.

*What if I find damaged asbestos in my building?*  
When ACM is properly managed, release of asbestos fibers into the air is prevented or minimized, and the risk of asbestos-related disease can be reduced to a negligible level.

- **Recognize** that there is indeed a hazard
- **Restrict** access to the area where the spill is located. Do not allow further damage to material.
- **Report** the problem to your

## *How can I identify an ACM ?*

While it is possible to “suspect” that a material contains asbestos by visual determination, laboratory analysis is the only way to identify asbestos in building materials.

In addition to official documentation, buildings will have a notification posted on bulletin boards listing ACM (and non-ACM) within a building and information packets in mechanical rooms or electrical closets. You may also encounter signs indicating a specific hazard or need for caution in any particular area.

## *Who do I contact at Cherry Point for ACM issues ?*

If you encounter suspicious material believed to be asbestos, contact your supervisor immediately.

Questions or comments regarding the identification and location of asbestos containing materials should be addressed to:

**Asbestos Program  
Manager**

## **QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS ABOUT ASBESTOS**



## *What is Asbestos ?*

Asbestos is a term used to describe several types of inorganic, fibrous, silicate minerals that can readily be separated into long, thin, strong fibers. These fibers are of sufficient flexibility to be woven, are heat and chemical resistant, possess excellent insulating characteristics, and are fire resistant.

Asbestos is mined from the earth in open pit quarries or underground mines. The mineral is then processed through a series of crushing and milling operations to produce a raw product that can be mixed or woven into other products.

The most common type of asbestos is Chrysotile, accounting for 95% of all asbestos used.

## *History*

Asbestos use dates back over 2000 years. It became a popular commercial product during the years following World War II.

Asbestos was used extensively in building materials because of its durability, strength, ability to insulate, and fireproofing capability.

In the 1960s it was confirmed that asbestos becomes a health hazard when it degrades into microscopic fibers.

Ongoing asbestos inspections at Cherry Point found asbestos to be present in some building materials at the facility.

An Operations and Maintenance is in effect to protect the health of building occupants and facility personnel from asbestos exposure.

*Where is asbestos found at Cherry Point ?*

During asbestos inspections at the facility asbestos has been found in a wide variety of building materials including:

**Pipe Insulation and Fittings  
Textured Surfacing Materials  
Drywall Joint Compound  
Gasket Materials  
Floor Tiles (9" and 12")  
Vinyl Sheet Flooring (linoleum)  
Asbestos Cement Board (Transite)  
Roofing Materials  
Caulking  
Various Sealants and Adhesives  
Light Fixture Heat Shields  
Window Glazing**

**Note:** The mere presence of asbestos containing materials in a building does not mean that the health of building occupants is at risk.

The primary risk group at Cherry Point is facilities maintenance workers who enter attic or crawlspace areas where asbestos may be present and in damaged condition and undisturbed asbestos containing materials (ACM) do not pose a health risk. ACM which is in good condition and is not damaged or disturbed is not likely to release asbestos fibers into the air.

Asbestos containing materials become hazardous when they release fibers into the air, due to damage, disturbance, or deterioration over time,. Once airborne, asbestos fibers can be inhaled.

*Will asbestos exposure cause health problems?*

Once emitted to the atmosphere, asbestos fibers can remain suspended in the air for long periods of time and can become lodged in lung tissue when inhaled. Once inhaled, asbestos related diseases may develop over periods of time as long as 10-40 years.

Lung cancer, asbestosis, mesothelioma, other diseases have all been linked to asbestos exposure.

Most of the cases of severe health problems resulting from asbestos exposure have been experienced by workers who were repeatedly exposed to very high levels of asbestos, such as shipyard workers.